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Application Serial No.: 09/418,397

List of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A method for removing DTMF signals from audio signals comprising the steps of:
 - examining audio signals for potential DTMF signals;
 - preparing the audio signals for transmission as digital packets;
 - while no potential DTMF signals have been detected, promptly transmitting a digital packet after sufficient time has elapsed for a potential DTMF signal to be detected in said digital packet; and
 - if a potential DTMF signal is detected, storing the digital packets and stalling transmission of stored digital packets until DTMF detection can be performed, and if the potential DTMF signal does not result in a DTMF detection, promptly transmitting the stored digital packets, and if the potential DTMF signal does result in a DTMF detection, discarding the stored digital packets and transmitting a control packet containing information relating to characteristics of a DTMF signal that was detected.
2. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein:
 - the step of preparing the audio signals for transmission as the digital packets comprises preparing the audio signals for transmission as RTP packets.
3. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein:
 - the step of transmitting said digital packet includes transmitting the digital packets over an IP network.
4. (original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of:

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transmitting the RTP packets over an IP network.

5. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein:

the audio signals include digitized representations of voice signals.

6. (original) The method according to claim 2, wherein:

the audio signals include digitized representations of voice signals.

7. (original) The method according to claim 3, wherein:

the audio signals include digitized representations of voice signals.

8. (original) The method according to claim 5, wherein:

the step of examining the audio signals for potential DTMF signals is performed
using digital signal processing.

9. (original) The method according to claim 6, wherein:

the step of examining the audio signals for potential DTMF signals is performed
using digital signal processing.

10. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein:

the step of examining the audio signals for potential DTMF signals is performed
using digital signal processing.

11. (original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of:

when the potential DTMF signal does result in a DTMF detection, preparing a
control packet comprising 32 bits of information having a format of:

RRRNNNNNRRVVVVVVDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD

where "R" designates reserved bits;

"N" designates bits of data representative of a DTMF digit;

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"V" designates bits of data representing the power level of the DTMF signal,
expressed in dBm0 after dropping the sign; and,
"D" designates bits of data indicating a duration for a DTMF signal, in timestamp
units.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein:

the "N" bits of data representative of a DTMF digit are encoded so that the

following encoded data represents the indicated DTMF digit:

an encoded "0" represents a DTMF digit of 0
an encoded "1" represents a DTMF digit of 1
an encoded "2" represents a DTMF digit of 2
an encoded "3" represents a DTMF digit of 3
an encoded "4" represents a DTMF digit of 4
an encoded "5" represents a DTMF digit of 5
an encoded "6" represents a DTMF digit of 6
an encoded "7" represents a DTMF digit of 7
an encoded "8" represents a DTMF digit of 8
an encoded "9" represents a DTMF digit of 9
an encoded "10" represents a DTMF digit of *
an encoded "11" represents a DTMF digit of #
an encoded "12" represents a DTMF digit of A
an encoded "13" represents a DTMF digit of B
an encoded "14" represents a DTMF digit of C

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an encoded "15" represents a DTMF digit of D.

13. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein:

the "N" bits of data representative of a DTMF digit are encoded so that the

following encoded data represents the indicated DTMF digit:

an encoded "16" represents a Flash.

14. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein:

the reserve bits are set to zero.

15. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein:

the reserve bits are set to zero.

16. (original) The method according to claim 13, wherein:

the reserve bits are set to zero.

17. (previously presented) A method for transmitting audio signals potentially including

voice signals and DTMF signals over an IP network, comprising the steps of:

processing digital representations of audio signals to detect potential DTMF

signals;

in a first mode of operation while no potential DTMF signal has been detected (a)

preparing the digital representations of audio signals for transmission as

RTP packets; and (b) transmitting an RTP packet over an IP network after

a predetermined period of time sufficient to allow the step of processing

digital representations of audio signals to detect potential DTMF signals to

be completed for said RTP packet;

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in a second mode of operation when a potential DTMF signal has been detected,
preparing the digital representations of audio signals for potential
transmission as RTP packets, storing the RTP packets and stalling
transmission of stored RTP packets while the potential DTMF signal is
processed to verify whether it is a valid DTMF signal;

- (a) if the potential DTMF signal is determined to not be a valid
DTMF signal, transmitting the stored RTP packets over an IP
network; and,
- (b) if the potential DTMF signal is determined to be a valid DTMF
signal; discarding the stored RTP packets, preparing an RTP
control packet containing information indicative of characteristics
of a DTMF signal, and transmitting the control packet over an IP
network.

18. (original) The method according to claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the RTP packets at a remote location coupled to an IP network;
decoding the RTP packets to recover digital representations of audio
signals;
converting digital representations of audio signals to analog signals;
receiving an RTP control packet at a remote location coupled to the IP network;
and,
generating DTMF signals having characteristics determined by information
contained in the RTP control packets.

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19. (previously presented) An apparatus for removing DTMF signals from audio signals
- to be transmitted over an IP network, comprising:
 - a telephony interface;
 - a digital processor coupled to the telephony interface for processing digital representations of audio signals to detect potential DTMF signals;
 - a microcontroller coupled to the digital processor, the microcontroller being operative to prepare the digital representations of audio signals for transmission as RTP packets;
 - memory coupled to the microcontroller for temporarily storing RTP packets;
 - a control register coupled to the digital processor and readable by the microcontroller, the control register including a flag bit indicative of the status of detection of a potential DTMF signal, the control register including one or more flag bits indicative of the detection of a valid DTMF signal;
 - a network interface coupled to the microcontroller for coupling RTP packets to an IP network; and
 - wherein when the flag bit indicative of the status of detection of a potential DTMF signal is not set, the RTP packets are promptly coupled to the network interface for transmission over the IP network, and when the flag bit indicative of the status of detection of a potential DTMF signal is set, the RTP packets are stored in the memory and transmission of stored RTP packets are stalled while the digital processor performs additional DTMF

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detection processing, and if the flag bit indicative of the status of detection of a potential DTMF signal is reset and a flag bit indicative of the detection of a valid DTMF signal is not set, the stored RTP packets are promptly coupled to the network interface for transmission over the IP network, and if a flag bit indicative of the detection of a valid DTMF signal is set, the stored RTP packets are discarded and a control packet is prepared by the microcontroller where the control packet contains information indicative of characteristics of a DTMF signal and the control packet is coupled to the network interface for transmission over the IP network.

20. (original) The apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

- a second network interface coupled to the IP network at a remote location;
- a second microcontroller coupled to the second network interface;
- a digital-to-analog converter coupled to the second microcontroller for converting digital representations of audio signals to analog signals; and,
- a DTMF signal generator coupled to the second microcontroller for generating DTMF signals having characteristics determined by information contained in a control packet.

21. (original) The apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

- a second network interface coupled to the IP network at a remote location;
- a second microcontroller coupled to the second network interface;

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a digital-to-analog converter coupled to the second microcontroller for converting digital representations of audio signals to analog signals; and,
a second digital processor operative to generate DTMF signals having characteristics determined by information contained in a control packet.

22. (previously presented) A communication method for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication method comprising:

sampling said audio signal to generate a plurality of samples;
digitizing said plurality of samples to generate a plurality of digitized samples;
detecting an energy indicative of said first frequency tone in said audio signal;
stalling said transmission of said digitized samples in response to said detecting said energy indicative of said first frequency tone in said audio signal;
determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal in response to said detecting said energy indicative of said first frequency tone in said audio signal;
generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal, discarding said digitized samples and transmitting said packet, in response to said determining that said audio signal includes said DTMF signal; and
transmitting said digitized samples stalled by said stalling, in response to said determining that said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

23. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

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24. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said detecting uses a wideband energy detector.

25. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said detecting compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

26. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said confirming confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

27. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said confirming confirms a frequency tolerance of each said tone.

28. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said confirming confirms a frequency deviation of each said tone.

29. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 22, wherein said confirming confirms a twist in said audio signal.

30. (previously presented) A communication device for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication device comprising:

a sampler capable of sampling said audio signal to generate a plurality of samples;

a digitizer capable of digitizing said plurality of samples to generate a plurality of digitized samples;

a detector capable of detecting an energy indicative of said first frequency tone in said audio signal; and

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a processor capable of stalling said transmission of said digitized samples and determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, in response to said detector detecting said energy indicative of said first frequency tone in said audio signal;

wherein said processor is further capable of generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal, discarding said digitized samples and transmitting said packet, in response to said determining that said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and further capable of transmitting said digitized samples stalled by said stalling, in response to said determining that said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

31. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

32. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said detector is a wideband energy detector.

33. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said detector compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

34. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said processor confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

35. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said processor confirms a frequency tolerance of each said tone.

36. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said processor confirms a frequency deviation of each said tone.

37. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 30, wherein said processor confirms a twist in said audio signal.

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38. (previously presented) A communication method for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication method comprising:

analyzing said audio signal to detect an element indicative of said DTMF;

stalling said transmission of said audio signal if said analyzing detects said element indicative of said DTMF, else continuing said transmission of said audio signal;

processing said audio signal, in response to detecting said element indicative of said DTMF, to determine whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal; and

discarding said audio signal, generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and transmitting said packet if said processing determines said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and transmitting said digitized samples stalled by said stalling if said processing determines said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

39. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 38, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

40. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 39, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

41. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 39, wherein said analyzing uses a wideband energy detector.

42. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 41, wherein said analyzing compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

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43. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 38, wherein said processing is capable of confirming an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

44. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 38, wherein said processing is capable of confirming a frequency tolerance of each said tone.

45. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 38, wherein said processing is capable of confirming a frequency deviation of each said tone.

46. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 38, wherein said processing is capable of confirming a twist in said audio signal.

47. (previously presented) A communication device for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication device comprising:

a processor capable of analyzing said audio signal to detect an element indicative of said DTMF, wherein said processor stalls said transmission of said audio signal if said processor detects said element indicative of said DTMF, else said processor continues said transmission of said audio signal;

wherein said processor processes said audio signal, in response to detecting said element indicative of said DTMF, to determine whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and wherein said processor discards said audio signal, generates a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and transmits said packet if said processor determines said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and said processor transmits said stalled digitized samples if said processor determines said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

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48. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 47, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

49. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 48, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

50. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 48, wherein said processor uses a wideband energy detector for analyzing said audio signal.

51. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 50, wherein said processor compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold for analyzing said audio signal.

52. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 47, wherein said processor is capable of confirming an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

53. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 47, wherein said processor is capable of confirming a frequency tolerance of each said tone.

54. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 47, wherein said processor is capable of confirming a frequency deviation of each said tone.

55. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 47, wherein said processor is capable of confirming a twist in said audio signal.

56. (previously presented) A communication method for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication method comprising:

detecting an element indicative of said DTMF;

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stalling said transmission of said audio signal, in response to said detecting said element indicative of said DTMF;

determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, in response to said detecting said element indicative of said DTMF; and

discarding said audio signal, generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and transmitting said packet, in response to said determining that said audio signal includes said DTMF signal;

transmitting said audio signal stalled by said stalling, in response to said determining that said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

57. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

58. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 57, wherein said detecting uses a wideband energy detector.

59. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 58, wherein said detecting compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

60. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

61. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said confirming confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

62. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said confirming confirms a frequency tolerance of each said tone.

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63. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said confirming confirms a frequency deviation of each said tone.

64. (previously presented) The communication method of claim 56, wherein said confirming confirms a twist in said audio signal.

65. (previously presented) A communication device for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication device comprising:

means for detecting an element indicative of said DTMF;

means for stalling said transmission of said audio signal for use in response to said means for detecting said element indicative of said DTMF;

means for determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal for use in response to said means for detecting said element indicative of said DTMF; and

means for discarding said audio signal, means for generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and means for transmitting said packet for use if said means for determining determines said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and means for transmitting said audio signal stalled by said stalling for use if said means for determining determines said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

66. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 65, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

67. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 66, wherein said means for detecting uses a wideband energy detector.

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68. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 67, wherein said means for detecting compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

69. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 65, wherein said means for confirming confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

70. (previously presented) A computer software product for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said computer software product comprising:

code for detecting an element indicative of said DTMF;

code for stalling said transmission of said audio signal for execution in response to said code for detecting said element indicative of said DTMF;

code for determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal in response to said code for detecting said element indicative of said DTMF;

code for discarding said audio signal, code for generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and code for transmitting said packet for execution in response to said code for determining determine that said audio signal includes said DTMF signal; and

code for transmitting said audio signal stalled by said code for stalling if said determining determines that said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

71. (previously presented) The computer software product of claim 70, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

72. (previously presented) The computer software product of claim 71, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

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73. (previously presented) The computer software product of claim 71, wherein said code for detecting uses a wideband energy detector.

74. (previously presented) The computer software product of claim 73, wherein said code for detecting compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

75. (previously presented) The computer software product of claim 70, wherein said code for confirming confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.

76. (previously presented) A communication device for a transmission of an audio signal, said audio signal including a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal having a first frequency tone and a second frequency tone, said communication device comprising:

a detector capable of detecting an element indicative of said DTMF; and

a processor capable of stalling said transmission of said audio signal and determining whether said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, in response to said detector detecting said element indicative of said DTMF;

wherein said processor is further capable of discarding said audio signal, generating a packet indicative of said DTMF signal and transmitting said packet if said processor determines that said audio signal includes said DTMF signal, and further capable of transmitting said audio signal stalled by said processor if said processor determines that said audio signal does not include said DTMF signal.

77. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 76, wherein said element is an energy of said first frequency.

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78. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 77, wherein said first frequency is a high frequency and said second frequency is a low frequency.

79. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 77, wherein said detector uses a wideband energy detector.

80. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 79, wherein said detector compares said energy with a high threshold and a low threshold.

81. (previously presented) The communication device of claim 76, wherein said processor confirms an existence of said first frequency and said second frequency in said audio signal.